

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 136

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 40

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 136—Relative to Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week.

[Filed with Secretary of State June 1, 2012.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 136, Ma. Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week.

This measure recognizes April 15 to April 21, 2012, inclusive, as “Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week.”

WHEREAS, In California, over 500,000 babies are born every year; and

WHEREAS, The American Academy of Pediatrics recognizes that babies, infants, and toddlers are especially vulnerable to abusive head trauma, also known as “Shaken Baby Syndrome,” the pattern of injury that results from an act of violent shaking by a parent or caregiver; and

WHEREAS, Shaken Baby Syndrome and other inflicted head trauma is now recognized as a leading cause of child fatalities among children who are physically abused; and

WHEREAS, Researchers at the University of California, Irvine, report that babies younger than five months of age are at the greatest risk of injury and death due to abuse or neglect; and

WHEREAS, A 2003 report in the Journal of the American Medical Association surveyed the incidence of Shaken Baby Syndrome and estimated that an average of 300 children will die each year from Shaken Baby Syndrome and 600 to 1,200 more children will be injured; and

WHEREAS, Medical professionals believe that there are thousands of cases of Shaken Baby Syndrome that are misdiagnosed or undetected; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that during an average year in California, 220 to 280 children under five years of age will require medical attention because of inflicted head injuries, and two-thirds of these injuries are likely to occur in babies or infants younger than one year of age; and

WHEREAS, Roughly one-third of the victims of Shaken Baby Syndrome will suffer from developmental problems, including partial or total blindness, hearing loss, seizures, speech and learning difficulties, paralysis, and severe intellectual disability; and

WHEREAS, The infliction of injuries often occurs when a parent or caregiver is not prepared to cope with the frustration and anger that can result from the inconsolable crying of an infant or unrealistic expectations of a child's behavior; and

WHEREAS, Shaken Baby Syndrome and the injuries inflicted are preventable; and

WHEREAS, The medical costs of treating Shaken Baby Syndrome cases and the costs of rehabilitation services to surviving infants average between \$18,000 and \$70,000 for initial hospitalizations, and may exceed more than \$1,000,000 for the care of a single disabled child over the course of his or her lifetime; and

WHEREAS, The lifetime cost of the estimated 220 to 280 Shaken Baby Syndrome victims each year in California ranges between \$78,000,000 and \$104,000,000; and

WHEREAS, The costs of those services are primarily paid by the Medi-Cal program, which in the year 2000 paid for 42.4 percent of births in the state, and by private health insurers, resulting in higher taxes and higher health insurance costs for all citizens of the state; and

WHEREAS, At least 75 percent of Shaken Baby Syndrome victims are Medi-Cal recipients when they are diagnosed; and

WHEREAS, Shaken Baby Syndrome cases further impose costs to communities in many ways, including the investigation and prosecution of Shaken Baby Syndrome cases, the tragic disruption of families, and the special education needs that are frequently required by those who have survived even modest head traumas; and

WHEREAS, Shaken Baby Syndrome prevention programs have demonstrated that educating new parents about the danger of shaking young children and how they can help protect their child from injury can effect a significant reduction in the number of Shaken Baby Syndrome cases; and

WHEREAS, The minimal costs and effort of these educational and preventative programs avert enormous medical and disability costs and untold grief for many families; and

WHEREAS, Efforts to prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome are supported by numerous organizations, including the National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome, the San Francisco Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention Project, the San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center, the Hannah Rose Foundation, and the Greater Bay Area Child Abuse Prevention Council Coalition; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature strongly supports efforts to protect our children, especially through education and awareness activities that enable parents to keep their children safe from injury and neglect; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature recognizes the week of April 15 to April 21, 2012, inclusive, as “Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week” in the State of California; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature requests that the Governor proclaim the week of April 15 to April 21, 2012, inclusive, as “Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week” in the State of California; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature shall undertake, and encourages the Governor to undertake, all practicable efforts to educate new parents, child care providers, foster and adoptive parents, babysitters, and other persons who care for our children about Shaken Baby Syndrome, including the causes and consequences of shaking injuries, the need to be prepared to

cope with frustration and anger, and the need to educate caregivers on ways to help protect children from injury; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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